



CITY OF LEESBURG

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Ordinance #xxxxx
Exhibit A
Adopted xxxxxxxxx

Prepared For:
City of Leesburg
Community Development Department
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CHAPTER X
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

A. INTRODUCTION

Recreation is defined as refreshment in body or mind by some form of play, amusement, or relaxation and is essential to our overall well-being. Realizing this, the City of Leesburg strives to provide all citizens with access to recreation facilities and open space areas. The City's lead office in charge of adequately designating parklands and providing public recreation opportunities is the Recreation and Parks Department. The purpose of this element is to identify parks and recreation facilities, and analyze current and projected park and recreational needs based on population projections. This element also contains specific goals, objectives, and policies to guide the provision of parks and recreation facilities through the year 2035.

B. INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Recreation may be classified as being either activity-based or resource-based. Activity-based recreation is defined by sites and facilities developed for the enjoyment of particular user-oriented, activities such as tennis, basketball, shuffleboard, soccer, or recreational programs such as aerobics or painting. Resource-based recreation, on the other hand, utilizes the natural environment to provide more passive activities such as picnicking, hiking, fishing, swimming, or boating. The City of Leesburg provides a wide range of recreation opportunities to its residents. The City's park inventory includes a total of twenty-six (26) parks and recreational facilities, which include City owned parks, and special use facilities, where citizens can enjoy both active and passive forms of recreation.

1. City Parks and Open Space

At present, the City of Leesburg park system includes twenty-one (21) city owned parks and recreational facilities, which encompass over 200 acres of public parklands. Table X- 3 shows an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities in the City of Leesburg. Map X- 1 shows the location of these parks. The table and map also show school recreational facilities open to the public.

City parks have been classified based on a hierarchy of park facilities in order to better determine the level of recreation and open space opportunities available to City residents. The classification and standards for the different types of parks were derived from the standards recommended by the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the *Outdoor Recreation in Florida – 2008, Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*. A description of the characteristics of each park-type is also included in the recreation plan, as well as in this element. Only sites that are officially designated as public parks have been included in this section. Vacant public lands and open space normally found in medians, buffers, retention areas and the like are not included.

As noted on Table X- 3, some City parks offer passive recreation opportunities while others offer active recreation. Some parks may offer both, as is the case of Venetian Gardens, which offers active recreational facilities, as well as passive areas for fishing and picnicking.

a. Regional Parks

Regional parks are large, resource-based parks serving more than two counties and often consisting of an area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, trails, boating, fishing, swimming and camping. They are usually located no more than an hour's driving distance of the residents they serve. The park should serve a population of over 100,000 and should range in size from a minimum of 250 acres to as much as several thousand acres. The City relies on the State and the County for the provision and maintenance of regional parks.

There are currently no regional parks within the City of Leesburg. However, a variety of recreational opportunities are offered at a regional level by the Federal Government, the State, Lake County, and the Lake County Water Authority and are easily accessible to Leesburg residents. Examples of these facilities are discussed below.

(1) *Ocala National Forest*

The 450,000-acre Ocala National Forest, located in Altoona, approximately twenty-five (25) miles from Leesburg, receives more visitors than any other national forest in Florida. The Ocala National Forest's sand pine scrub ecosystem is the world's largest continuous forest of this type. The Forest offers a wide array of hiking and bicycling trails and is abound with scenic camping opportunities. An eclectic variety of plants, trees, and wildlife such as white-tail deer, alligators, bald eagles, and ospreys are known to inhabit the forest and may be observed along the forest's inviting trails.

Within the Ocala National Forest lies Alexander Springs Recreation Area. Known for its unusual beauty, this mammoth spring gushes approximately 80 million gallons of crystal clear water per day, at a year-round temperature of 72 degrees. The surrounding subtropical vegetation of palms, hardwood swamp, and sandpine ridges make this campground an extraordinary place. Snorkeling and scuba diving in Alexander Springs are excellent ways to enjoy the abundant fish and swaying underwater vegetation.

(2) *Lake Griffin State Recreation Area*

Lake Griffin State Recreation Area, developed in the late 1960s, is located in Fruitland Park, approximately two (2) miles north of Leesburg. This State Recreation Area consists of over 425 acres of woodlands and freshwater swamp and is home to Florida's fifth largest live oak tree, which measures over 150 feet tall and 10 feet in circumference. The recreation area also contains 40 campsites with water and electrical hook-ups, a boat ramp, picnic area, picnic shelter and nature trail. While not directly on Lake Griffin, the boat ramp provides access to the lake via powerboat or canoe. Swimming is not permitted in waters within the park.

(3) *Lake Louisa State Park*

Lake Louisa State Park, located in Clermont, approximately twenty-five (25) miles from Leesburg, is a 4,372-acre state park, which lies on the shores of Lake Louisa in the northeast corner of the Green Swamp. Lake Louisa is one of 13 in a chain of lakes connected by the Palatka River, which is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water.

Recreational activities offered at the park include swimming, picnicking, fishing, canoeing, nature study, and several miles of marked equestrian trails. Hiking is also permitted on the horse trails and an abundance of wildlife can be seen. Birding is a favorite activity with sightings dependent on the seasons. In addition, the park also offers a bathhouse with showers, a shaded picnic area, a public boat ramp located on the river between Lake Louisa and Lake Susan, and a white sand beach.

(4) *Flat Island Preserve*

Flat Island Preserve, which is property of the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), is a 2300-acre conservation area in the Okahumpka Marsh located southwest of Leesburg, west of Lake Harris and north of Lake Denham. Within the Preserve is a 4.5-mile loop trail that is a portion of the Daubenspire Trail. The Flat Island section of the trail was built and is maintained by the Florida Trail Association. There is a long boardwalk off the south section of the loop that leads to a canoe launch. Primitive camping is allowed on Flat Island by permit and canoes are available for rent through the LCWA Office. Additional trails are planned on the property in the future.

(5) *Hickory Point*

The Hickory Point Recreation Area is a 68-acre multi-use waterfront park, which is also owned by the Lake County Water Authority. It is located less than ten (10) miles from Leesburg, along the northern shore of Lake Harris immediately north of the Howey Bridge in Tavares. Hickory Point provides a diverse range of recreational activities which include a screened pavilion, barbecue grills, a playground, horseshoe pits, a sand volleyball court, a swimming beach, and open-field play areas, as well as a fishing pier and 12 boat ramps.

(6) *Sawgrass Island Preserve*

Sawgrass Island Preserve is a 1,168-acre site located approximately twenty miles from Leesburg, at the north end of Lake Yale in Umatilla. The preserve's major feature is a 600-acre shallow marsh. Approximately 61% of the property is comprised of forested and herbaceous wetlands (692.2 acres) with the remaining 39% consisting of uplands (444.5 acres). The upland community types found on the Preserve include unimproved pasture,

shrub/brushland, mesic hammocks, xeric hammocks, and pine flatwoods. Wildlife includes sandhill cranes, gopher tortoises, pocket gophers, ring-neck ducks, foxes and scrub jays. Activities that can be enjoyed in the preserve include bird watching, hiking, camping, and horseback riding.

7) *Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area*

Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area is a 7,089 acre site located between State Road 42 and SR 44, just north of Lisbon, on the east side of Lake Griffin and west of County Road 452. This area is considered the “crown jewel” of bird watching in Lake County. This conservation area is owned by the St. Johns River Water Management District and offers wildlife viewing, seasonal waterfowl hunting, fishing, hiking, bicycling, canoeing, horseback riding, and boating.

8) *P.E.A.R. (Palatlakaha Environmental & Agricultural Reserve) Park*

This 318 acre park is owned by Lake County and is located off of US 27 in south Leesburg. The site is bordered by the Palatlakaha River on the north and west. Approximately 51 acres of the park is within the City limits of Leesburg and comprises the active resources of the park which include a multi-purpose field, playground, softball fields, picnic pavilion, exercise trail and dog park. Future plans include tennis and pickleball courts. Other activities offered at the park include a canoe launch, hiking trail, multi-use trail, butterfly garden, community garden, and bird watching.

9) *Bourlay Historic Nature Park*

This 83.1 acre property was donated to the LCWA by Arthur “Buddy” Boulay and is located on the southwest shore of Lake Griffin, north of Highway 441 off of Canal Street in Leesburg. The Bourlay family home is located on the site and this property was also the home of an early steamboat landing. Activities include hiking, biking, kayaking, bird watching, exercise stations, and picnicking.

10) *Sabal Bluff Preserve*

This 55.7 acre property was also donated to the LCWA by Arthur “Buddy” Boulay and is located on the shore of Lake Griffin. Activities include hiking, fishing, kayaking, picnicking and bird watching.

b. Community Parks

Community parks are defined as “ride to” parks that should be located near major streets or arterials. Community parks are designed to serve the needs of four to six neighborhoods that have residents within a radius of up to three (3) miles. Typical facilities found in community parks are designed to serve the entire family and include both passive and active recreation opportunities such as playground areas, recreation buildings, sports fields, paved multi-purpose courts, picnic areas, open or free play areas, swimming pools, and landscaping. The City has two (2) community parks which include Venetian Gardens, which within its 110 acres includes Rogers Park and Lake Harris Ski Beach and Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex. It should be noted that this acreage includes some of the lake as well. Resources and facilities that can be enjoyed by the entire community include a swimming pool, playground, sand volleyball courts, the Leesburg Community Building, the Leesburg Cultural Arts Building, open space, covered and uncovered picnic tables, boat ramps, bath house, and the Venetian Cove Marina which offers boat storage areas, fuel, rest rooms, food and supplies, boat repair and sales, fork lift, and cleaning services.

Venetian Gardens is a popular spot for boat launching, fishing, and bird watching. Several significant events are held at Venetian Gardens, which draw citizen from all parts of the City. These events include the City of Leesburg Fireworks Celebration, a large Easter egg hunt, and the ESPN-hosted bass fishing tournament, as well several small fishing tournaments throughout the year.

The Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex offers four (4) adult baseball/softball fields, two (2) Babe Ruth baseball fields, two (2) soccer/football fields, two (2) girls fast pitch softball fields, toddler playground, covered picnic area, concession stand, and a walking track. This 80 acre facility is located at 2275 Hollow Lane in western Leesburg.

c. Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are “walk to” parks that are generally located along streets where people can walk or bicycle without encountering heavy traffic. They serve the population of a neighborhood in a radius of up to three-fourths (3/4) of a mile. The size of a neighborhood park usually ranges from 2 to 10 acres. Typical facilities provided include playground areas, recreation buildings, sports fields, paved multi-purpose courts, picnic areas, open or free play areas, and landscaping.

There are currently ten (10) parks that can be categorized as neighborhood parks based upon acreage, location, and facilities available. These parks include Berry Park, Corrine Williams Park, Fountain Lake Park, Herlong Park, Jessie L. Holliman Park, John L. Johnson Park, Lake Dixie Park, Singletary Park, the Susan Street Complex, and the Recreation Complex. This count does not include Venetian Gardens Community Park or Sleepy Hollow Complex, which also offer those facilities normally found in neighborhood parks.

d. Special Use Facilities

Special use facilities are designed to serve the unique recreational needs of certain population groups. One example within the City of Leesburg is the Mote-Morris House, which is a historic home constructed circa 1892. The Mote Morris House was formerly located at 1021 West Main Street, until September 1990, when it was purchased by the City and relocated to its present location of 1195 West Magnolia Street. The Mote-Morris House is now available for public use and is considered a recreational opportunity for City residents as it offers wedding facilities and a pavilion. Other special use facilities include, but are not limited to, Dabney Recreation Complex, Leesburg Dog Park, the Pat Thomas Memorial Stadium, which is also used by Leesburg High School for home games, Leesburg Community Garden, the Shuffleboard courts at the Palmetto Street Complex, and the National Guard Armory which is used for Wheelchair basketball.

e. Open Space

Open space is defined as any land or water surface that affords unobstructed physical movement, and is relatively free of human-made structural mass. Open space can be either publicly or privately owned. Public open space can include areas for public use, such as lakes or green space in the City's parks, or open space that is owned by the City, but restricted to the public, as is the case with conservation land and stormwater retention areas. Private open space can include green space found in private parks, golf courses, or agricultural lands. The City's Code of Ordinances ensures that there is adequate open space to serve as wetland and floodplain buffers, as well as ample impervious surface to protect the City's groundwater resources. The Conservation Element of this Growth Management Plan ensures that such areas remain undeveloped, as their preservation is crucial in the protection of wetlands, floodplains, vegetative and wildlife communities, and the City's potable water supply.

2. City Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities are user-oriented and activity based (as opposed to resource based). These facilities are normally located within parks. The City of Leesburg has a wide variety of recreational facilities to serve its population. Most parks within the City provide at least one type of active recreational facility, while some facilities provide a concentration of single sport facilities, such as the Shuffleboard courts at the Palmetto Street Complex. Table X- identifies the recreational facilities provided at each park, school, or special facility. For example, Leesburg has 13 baseball/softball fields, which is an abundance for a City of its size. The City has 24 shuffleboard courts, which is also surplus, however, this is typical due to the age of the population in Florida communities. In addition, the City of Leesburg also has four (4) basketball courts, five (5) boat ramps, five (5) playgrounds, four (4) racquetball/handball courts, two (2) swimming pools, and eight (8) tennis courts. A new community gymnasium is located at the Leesburg Recreational Complex on Griffin Road.

An Interlocal Agreement exists between the City of Leesburg and the Leesburg Junior Jackets, the Mt. Calvary Community Crusaders, and the Boys & Girls Club of Lake County. These Agreements are considered on an annual basis during the budget process. The Junior Jackets, a not-for-profit agency, operates a youth football program.

3. State Facilities

In addition to the previously mentioned Lake Louisa State Park, the General James A. Van Fleet State Trail, an amenity of General James A. Van Fleet State Park, traverses through west Lake County, and provides Leesburg residents with an opportunity for hiking and bicycling excursions. Locally, Herlong Park (shown in Table X- 3 as a neighborhood park), located on Lake Griffin in Leesburg, is also a State-owned property that meets the recreational needs of City residents. An agreement exists between the City of Leesburg and the State of Florida regarding the use of the park. In this situation, the City mows the property in return for use of the boat ramp and additional facilities. The City also has a facilities use agreement with the State Armory Board whereby the City supplies utilities to the National Guard Armory and, in return, is allowed to use the Armory for certain public events.

4. County Facilities

Lake County operates and maintains numerous park facilities that are available to the citizens of Leesburg (Table X- 4).

5. Private Facilities

Some recreational facilities and services such as bowling alleys, golf courses, movie theatres, arcades, etc. are provided by the private sector, and are available to the public through a membership or a fee. The provision this type of recreational resources is normally based on market studies. Therefore, it can be assumed that the quantity of such resources will increase as the City's population increases. The following are examples of private recreational facilities serving the residents of Leesburg:

AMC Lake Square 12 Theatres	10401 US Highway 441	Leesburg, FL
AMF Leesburg Lanes	2813 West Main Street	Leesburg, FL
Main Street Gymnastics	215 East Main Street	Leesburg, FL
Monarch Golf Club	5325 St. Andrews Arc	Leesburg, FL

Skate World	424 North Palmetto Street	Leesburg, FL
Tilt Arcade	10401 US Highway 441 #102	Leesburg, FL

Arlington Ridge Golf Course

In addition, Leesburg Regional Medical Center (LRMC) offers a Wellness Center, located at LRMC North Campus, 700 N. Palmetto Street in Leesburg. The LRMC Wellness Center is available for members and features an indoor heated lap pool, a whirlpool, Cybex, Universal and free-weight training equipment, and a wide array of cardiovascular exercise equipment. The Wellness Center provides individualized fitness programs to meet the needs of each member, and exercise is always supervised by degreed Exercise Specialists.

Fitness programs offered at the Wellness Center include, but are not limited to, aquacize (water aerobics), step aerobics, toning classes, monthly specialty classes and weight loss classes.

Other private recreational facilities are found in residential developments within Leesburg. The facilities provided typically include community/exercise rooms, pools, tennis courts, etc. Some of the developments providing this type of recreation are listed in Table X- . These facilities have been addressed in the analysis of park service areas.

C. ANALYSIS

Specific recreational demands do not remain constant over time. As the population demographics change, recreational demands change. Attitudes and opinions can be drastically altered from a shift in the demographic makeup of a community. Therefore, it is necessary to assess recreational needs and future demands for facilities in order to plan for the future.

1. Recreational Preferences

The City of Leesburg population is projected to increase by over 36,000 residents in the next two decades. According to the 2010 Census, the median age of residents in 2010 was 40.7 and persons aged 65 or older comprised 22.6 percent of the population while persons under the age of 18 comprised 23.2 percent of the population. This pattern is expected to continue through the long-term planning period. This new data reflects that the City during the last decade started to balance its population more evenly than in the previous timeframe. This illustrates that during the next decade more pressure will likely be placed on public recreation since the growth in the 0-18 age group during the previous decade (2000 – 2010) increased and a decrease occurred in the +65 age group. The +65 age groups historically provide their own recreation contained within their private developments. To accurately reflect changes in public demand, tools are needed to identify them. One method is to survey the citizens for their input. From September to November of 2001, the City conducted a survey to determine citizen usage, satisfaction, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The survey was sent to approximately 2,000 of the City's randomly chosen utility customers. The goal was to obtain at least 400 completed surveys. The goal was exceeded and 438 surveys were completed. The results showed that 30.8% of the population participate in leisure activities one (1) to five (5) hours a week, and 33.3% of residents participate in leisure activities six (6) to ten (10) hours per week. Approximately 9% of the population said that they do not participate in leisure activities. The results of the survey are shown below:

Walking/Jogging	59%	Camping	12%
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Swimming	35%	Hiking	9%
Festivals	30%	Football	8%
Arts/Crafts	28%	Softball	8%
Fishing	25%	Baseball	7%
Biking	25%	Tennis	6%
Golf	25%	Basketball	6%
Nature Preserves	22%	Skating/Skateboarding	4%
Hobbies	21%	Soccer	4%
Fitness/Aerobics	20%	Gymnastics	4%
Picnics	19%	In-line Skating/Hockey	3%
Boating	18%	Racquetball	2%
Dance	17%	Equestrian	2%
Bowling	16%	Other	9%
Weight Training	13%	Don't Participate in Activities	9%

Park Development Guidelines Site guidelines are a set of general criteria for determining specific types of amounts of parklands necessary to accommodate the recreational needs of the local community. State and national standards generally establish a classification of parks and open space areas. The criteria define the facility type, service area, and population served and the facilities available for various types of community recreation sites. The City will utilize the overall guidelines suggested in the "Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008." The guidelines for park development and facility standards are outlined in Tables X-1 and X-2 below.

Table X -1: Park Guidelines

Park Facility	Location	Service Area	Area Per 1,000 Population	Population Served	Park Adjoining School	Separated Park	Facilities
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood area adjacent to elementary school when feasible	1/4 - 1/2 mile	2 acres	5,000 maximum	Minimum of 2 acres	Minimum of 5 acres	Play structures, recreational buildings, court games, hard courts, tennis courts, internal trails, shuffleboard, volleyball courts, picnic area, open area, landscaping
Community Park	Usually serves two or more neighborhoods	1/2 - 3 miles	2 acres	5,000 maximum	Minimum of 5 acres	Minimum of 20 acres; Optimal is 20-50 acres	All the facilities found in a neighborhood park plus informal ball fields, swimming pools, archery ranges, disc golf areas, ornamental gardens, open space and facilities for cultural activities

Source: Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008

Table X- 2: Facility Guidelines

Facility Guideline Standards	
Facility	Standards Based on Median Population
Baseball/Softball Field	1 field per 5,000 population
Basketball Court	1 court per 5,000 population
Boat Ramp	1 lane per 5,000 population
Football/Soccer Field	1 field per 6,000 population
Equipped Play Area	1 area per 10,000 population
Hiking/Nature/Fitness Trail	1 mile per 6,750 population
Picnic Area	1 site per 6,000 population
Handball/Racquetball Court	1 court per 10,000 population
Shuffleboard Court	1 court per 6,000 population
Swimming Pool	1 pool per 25,000 population
Tennis Courts	1 court per 2,000 population
Volleyball Court	1 court per 6,000 population

Source: Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008

2. Service Area

Determining service area is as important as the range of population served, as it helps determine location of future parks, avoiding concentration. Parks need to be dispersed to ensure that all residents have easy access to recreation facilities and open space. The following section gives recommended locational standards for types of parks. As noted above, the City is satisfactory when it comes to location. However, future parks will be a consideration for newly annexed areas if they are developed for residential purposes.

a. Regional Parks

Regional parks should serve a population of over 100,000 and should range in size from a minimum of 250 acres to as much as several thousand acres. However, the City relies on the State and the County for the provision and maintenance of regional parks. Currently, the City of Leesburg is within the service area, based on one hour's driving distance, from the Ocala National Forest, Lake Griffin State Recreation Area, Lake Louisa State Park, Flat Island Preserve, Hickory Point, Emerald Marsh Conservation Area, P.E.A.R. Park and Sawgrass Island Preserve. Therefore, the City of Leesburg is adequately served with regional parks.

b. Community Parks

Community parks should serve wider neighborhood area within a three (3) mile radius with an optimum size of 20-50 acres. Existing City parks are described above.

c. Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks should serve more local neighborhoods. They are generally smaller in size and within three-quarter (3/4) miles of residential areas. Existing neighborhood parks are described above.

3. Special Groups Recreational Needs

Special recreation groups are recognized as a large portion of the population of Leesburg. Elderly people, young people, and people who are mobility impaired are all provided with accessible recreation facilities by the City of Leesburg's through the Recreation and Parks Department.

The elderly are afforded the provision of several shuffleboard courts located throughout the City. Although not provided by the City of Leesburg, there is a Leesburg Senior Center located at 1211 Penn Street. This Senior Center is a United Way Agency operated by the Lake County Department of Senior Services. The Center's recreational programs, provided for seniors aged 55 years and older, include planned leisure events such as the following:

- Aerobics
- Card Games such as Bridge
- Bingo

- Dancing
- Congregate meals

The young are afforded a wide variety of activities through the City's Recreation and Parks Department, including youth athletic leagues, lessons, and camps, which are all offered for a nominal fee. Below is a list of specific activities.

PreSchool Leagues**Start Smart Baseball****Start Smart Soccer****Youth Leagues**

Boys Youth Tackle Football

Leesburg Youth Baseball Cal Ripkin Minor League

Youth Junior Basketball

Leesburg Youth Baseball Cal Ripkin Major League

Cheerleading Squad

Hot Shots Basketball

Prep Volleyball

Leesburg Babe Ruth League

Wheelchair Basketball

Leesburg Little Miss Softball

Junior Soccer

Babe Ruth Junior Miss Softball

Prep Basketball

World Cup Soccer

Leesburg Cap League Baseball

Pee Wee Soccer

T-Ball

Babe Ruth Senior Miss Softball

Start Smart Golf

Lessons

Cheerleading

Skating

International Folk Dancing

Tennis

Tang Soo Do Karate

Bowling

Swimming

Camps

Girls Fast Pitch Softball Clinic

Summer Day Camp

Christmas Vacation Baseball Camp

Christmas Vacation Softball Camp

Challenger British Soccer Camp

Spring Break Day Camp

Winter Break Softball

Winter Break Day Camp

School Daze Out

Winter Break Baseball Camp

Tennis Camp

Dog Obedience

Adults are afforded a wide variety of activities through the City's Recreation and Parks Department, which are offered for a nominal fee. Below is a list of specific activities:

Adult Classes/Leagues

Tennis Lessons	Beginner's Classes in Mountain Dulcimer
Water Volleyball	American Red Cross 1 st Aid & Safety
Aquacise	Lap Swim
Adult Summer Soccer	Volleyball
Men's Basketball League	Women's Church Softball League
Coed Softball League	Women's Industrial Softball League
Adult Golf League	Men's Industrial Softball League
Parent's Night Out	

The City offers recreational opportunities for people who are mobility impaired. These opportunities include a designated time to swim in Venetian Gardens' wheelchair accessible swimming pool, as well as wheelchair basketball and baseball, offered at the National Guard Armory, and the Lake County Special Olympics.

4. Provision of Future Parks and Open Space

Parklands serve two purposes, to conserve open space and natural resources, and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities. The acquisition of recreation areas is one of the best means for conserving open space. Demand for outdoor recreation opportunities can be met by providing parks for resource-based pursuits such as boating or picnicking, as well as parks for active user-oriented pursuits such as tennis, baseball, and basketball.

The City has a few plans for the development of parks and recreational facilities. They include the following.

a. **Holliman Way Park**

The proposed Holliman Way Park is located within the Carver Heights CRA. The proposed park will consist of a playground, two pavilions, picnic areas, walking path around the pond and a connection to the proposed Gardenia Trail. Construction of the park is contingent upon grant funding.

b. **Leesburg Greenway Trail**

The Leesburg Trails Master Plan was adopted by the City Commission on October 11, 2004. The final document details existing and proposed trail corridors, as well as design guidelines, prioritization and funding mechanisms. The Leesburg Greenway Trail network of trails will serve as a recreational and transportation connector to the downtown business area, residential neighborhoods and various parks. Ultimately, the Leesburg Greenway Trail will provide connectivity to the county and regional

trail system. The network of trails include Gardenia Trail, Lake Denham Trail, Magnolia Trail, Tav-Lee Trail, Venetian Gardens Trail, and Wild-Lee Trail.

- Gardenia Trail – This proposed 10.9 mile long trail would connect Fruitland Park to the Carver Heights Neighborhood Carver Middle School and the Susan Street Recreational Complex.
- Lake Denham Trail – This proposed 10 mile trail segment would be a connector from the Magnolia Trail to the Lake Denham Nature Park and Flat Island Preserve. The City already owns several miles of abandoned rail road right of way along this route.
- Magnolia Trail – The first phase of this trail was completed in October 2003 and runs from the Mote-Morris House at 12th Street to Canal Street. There is a potential to connect this trail to the Tav-Lee Trail which would provide a trail system to the Sleepy Hollow Complex, Lake Sumter Community College, Lake Square Mall and the Lake County Government Complex in Tavares.
- Tav-Lee Trail – This 10.4 mile planned and partially constructed trail system runs from U.S. 19 in Tavares to U.S. 27 in Leesburg. Currently, 3.4 miles of this trail was completed by FDOT.
- Venetian Gardens Trail – This trail system has been constructed and runs along Canal Street. The trail is designed as a connector between Tav-Lee Trail, Wild-Lee Trail and the Magnolia Trail.
- Wild-Lee Trail – This proposed trail would connect Leesburg to Wildwood.

The City also recently acquired railroad right-of-way through the Rails to Trails movement for the development of The City of Leesburg Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail and a linear park. The City of Leesburg Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail is a planned three-quarter mile trail that will run from the Mote-Morris House on 12th Street to Venetian Gardens, and will form part of the connection between the TAV-LEE Trail and the Leesburg-Okahumpka Trail, an interconnecting loop within the planned Central Florida Loop Trail System. The TAV-LEE Trail when completed will be a bike/pedestrian trail that will connect Leesburg and Tavares. It will be incorporated in the widening of U. S. Highway 441. The Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail is being designed to accommodate individuals who want to walk, hike, jog, bicycle, or roller skate. Preliminary design concepts are divided into two segments: the abandoned railroad right-of-way and the Canal Street right-of-way. The railroad right-of-way consists of abandoned railbed, which is approximately 50 feet wide, and runs from 12th Street to Canal Street, a distance of about 0.6 miles. This section is planned to be a 12-foot section with bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Where possible, the Trail will be buffered using landscape materials including various native xeric

type trees and shrubs. Canal Street is an existing street in the City of Leesburg that will provide a connection from the railroad right-of-way to Venetian Gardens. The Canal Street right-of-way is approximately 60 feet wide and currently includes two 20-foot paved lanes and sidewalks on each side of the street. The City plans to re-stripe the paved sections of the street to provide bicycle paths along both sides of the street. Incorporating Canal Street into the Trail extends the length of the Trail by approximately 850 feet and provides an interim trailhead with the parking facilities at Venetian Gardens. Construction design for the first phase of the City's Rails to Trails Project has begun, and actual construction is expected to start in the fall. The City of Leesburg filed a formal request with the U. S. Surface Transportation Board for a Public Use Condition on other abandoned railroad lines in the vicinity of Leesburg in order to reserve all of them for future use as recreational trails.

c. Other

The City of Leesburg has expressed the need for a skate park and an aquatic center; however, no formal arrangements have been made.

5. Access to Recreational Sites and Facilities

Access to existing parks is well suited to many special needs groups. Special considerations will need to be addressed on a site-by-site basis, for deficiencies in the special access needs of these groups. For example, while people with disabilities are provided parking areas at most of the parks, wheelchair access is not provided in the majority of these parks. Each special needs group has particular access problems which will need to be addressed. Consideration to these access issues will need to be given at the time of new park development.

According to the ADA, an important aspect of accessibility to be considered when constructing new parks or altering existing parks, is the issue of stable ground surfacing, which allows a person with mobility impairment to negotiate with dignity. For example, a large area of loose fill such as sand or wood chips is not easily accessible. Rather, a design following ADA guidelines might use a combination of more rigid surfaces such as an engineered wood fiber, rubber surfaces along accessible routes, clear ground spaces, and maneuvering spaces, in conjunction with small areas of loose fill.

Per ADA standards, consideration should be given to the general layout of youth play areas, particularly to the integration of elements and spaces that can be accessed by children who are differently-abled. Specifically, in areas where elevated play components are provided, additional ground level play equipment must be provided and incorporated into the same play areas. Additionally, the ADA requires that at least 50% of elevated play components must be located on an accessible route and connected by a ramp. The inclusion of soft contained play structures would also provide recreational opportunities for children with disabilities.

In order to address ADA standards, concrete pathways have been installed in Venetian Gardens. These internal pathways provide stability for wheelchair access throughout the park.

The existing system of City parks affords access to cyclists and pedestrians, as the parks are numerous and dispersed in residential areas throughout the City. Future bicycle path facilities should be designed so as to join recreational areas together with residential areas to upgrade the accessibility for all citizens to recreation areas. Bicycle path facilities and Rails to Trails Projects are discussed further in the Transportation Element of this Growth Management Plan. A map depicting existing and proposed bicycle facilities can be found in the Transportation Element as well.

6. Public Participation in Recreation Planning

The City of Leesburg recognizes the importance of public input and conducts public meetings on a case-by-case basis for specific projects. Citizens are also provided the opportunity to serve as volunteers in many different recreation areas.

Table X- 3: Inventory of City Parks and Recreational Facilities 2011.

	Parks	Acres	Active/Passive	Resources & Facilities
Community				
1	Venetian Gardens/Rogers Park/Lake Harris Ski Beach	110	Both	Natural Resources: Lake Harris Recreational Facilities: 1 swimming pool, Playground, 2 sand volleyball courts Other: 14 covered picnic tables, 9 uncovered picnic tables, the Venetian Cove Marina, boat ramps, bath house, Leesburg Community Building, Leesburg Cultural Arts Building, open space, Martin Luther King, Jr. Walkway.
2	Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex	80	Both	Natural Resources: Wetlands, lake Recreational Facilities: 8 baseball/softball fields, 2 soccer/football fields, playground Other: Picnic tables, restrooms, concessions, maintenance building, walking track
Neighborhood				
3	Berry Park	35	Passive	Natural Resources: Pond Recreational Facilities: Playground Other: ¼ mile walking path, water fountain, restroom, BBQ grills, and covered picnic areas
4	Corrine Williams Park	1.5	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 youth playground, 1 basketball court Other: Picnic area
5	Fountain Lake Park	35	Passive	Natural Resources: Pond Recreational Facilities: 1 youth playground Other: 5 covered picnic tables, lighted walking path, open space

6	Herlong Park	45.8	Passive	Natural Resources: Lake Griffin Recreational Facilities: 1 boat ramp Other: 1 fishing dock, 7 covered picnic tables, parking facility, antique train engine, open space
7	Jessie L. Holliman Park	0.50	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 youth playground Other: Picnic area
8	John L. Johnson Park	2.0	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 youth Playground, 2 basketball courts Other: Picnic area
9	Lake Dixie Park	3	Passive	Natural Resources: Lake Dixie Recreational Facilities: none Other: Paved pathway, with lights along the path
10	Recreational Complex	11	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: Gymnasium and an outdoor basketball court Other: Recreation offices
11	Singletary Park	2	Passive	Natural Resources: Lake Harris Recreational Facilities: 2 boat ramps Other: 1 fishing pier, parking facility, open space.
12	Susan Street Complex	24.5	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 4 lighted tennis courts, 4 lighted racquetball courts, 2 batting cages, 4 lighted Little League baseball fields, 1 lighted football/soccer field Other: Picnic tables, BBQ grills
Trails				
13	Magnolia Trail	N/A	Active	Benches and Outdoor exercise equipment, 7/10 of a mile log

14	Venetian Gardens Trail	N/A	Active	
Mini-Parks ⁽¹⁾				
15	Main Street Mini-Park	See Note (2)	Passive	Natural Resources: Open Space Recreational Facilities: none Other: Bench
16	Perkins/Johnson Mini-Park	See Note (2)	Passive	Natural Resources: Open Space Recreational Facilities: None Other: Bench
17	Sunshine/Webster Mini-Park	See Note (2)	Passive	Natural Resources: Open Space Recreational Facilities: None Other: Bench
18	Towne Square Park	See Note (2)	Passive	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: None Other: Benches, Streetscape
Special Use Facilities				
19	Canal Street Field	1.2	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 Babe Ruth League baseball field, 1 basketball court Other: None
20	H O Dabney Recreation Complex	2	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 swimming pool Other: Bath house, picnic area
21	Leesburg Dog Park	N/A	Passive	Natural Resources: Lakes Recreational Facilities: None Other: Parking lot, rinse station, water stations, shade structures with picnic tables, doggie fire hydrants, separate areas for large and small dogs
22	Mote-Morris House	2	Passive	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: None Other: Historic home for public use.
23	National Guard Armory	0.3	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 indoor basketball court Other: Meeting facilities

24	Palmetto Street Complex	2	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 4 lighted tennis courts, 24 lighted shuffleboard courts Other: Fitness Center
25	Pat Thomas Memorial Stadium/Lowe Field	6.5	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: Regulation baseball field with stadium seating Other: Picnic tables, restrooms
26	Leesburg Community Garden at Jason "Doc" Titus Field		Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: None Other: 20' x 15' garden plots, 6 water spigots, and 20' roll gate
27	Lake William & Lake Mary Park	21	Passive	Natural Resources: Lakes Recreational Facilities: None Other: Walking path

- (1) Neighborhood parks also serve as mini-parks for the immediate neighborhood.
(2) Acreage for mini-parks is not available. These parks are based on service area rather than population served.
(3) Once completed, these facilities will serve as neighborhood parks.

Source: City of Leesburg Recreation and Parks Department, August 2011.

Table X- 4: Lake County Parks and Recreational Facilities.

PARK NAME	ACRES	PROXIMITY	CLASS	TYPE	AMENITIES
Arnold Brothers Boat Ramp	0.15	Groveland	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp, picnicking, boardwalk
Astatula Boat Ramp	0.25	Astatula	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Astor Lions Park	10.00	Astor	Neighborhood	Active	2 ball fields, basketball courts, football/soccer field, playground, tennis courts, restrooms and picnic shelter
Butler Street Boat Ramp	3.45	Astor	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Carlton Village Park	3.09	Lady Lake	Mini	Resource	Undeveloped
East Lake Community Park	48.53	Mt. Plymouth/ Sorrento	Community	Active	In the process of being developed
Ferndale Preserve	196.00	Ferndale	Conservation	Resource	boat ramp, parking, kiosk, pavilion, restroom, restoration
Haines Creek Park	36.09	Leesburg	Conservation	Resource	undeveloped
John's Lake Boat Ramp	1.30	Winter Garden	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp, dock
Lake Dalhousie Boat Ramp	0.70	Eustis	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Lake George Boat Ramp	0.70	Astor	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Lake Holly Boat Ramp	0.50	Umatilla	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Lake Idamere Park	45.00	Tavares	Community	Passive	fishing, hiking, picnicking, playground, parking, kiosk

PARK NAME	ACRES	PROXIMITY	CLASS	TYPE	AMENITIES
Lake Jem Park & Boat Ramp	11.00	Tavares	Neighborhood	Passive	½ basketball court, fishing, boat ramp, trails, playground, restrooms, parking, kiosk undeveloped
Lake Joanna Park	0.50	Eustis	Mini	Resource	
Lake Mack Park	1.65	DeLand	Mini	Passive	½ basketball court, fishing, picnicking, playground, restrooms Closed
Lake Saunders Boat Ramp	0.20	Tavares	Special Use	Resource	
Lake Thomas Cove Park	4.60	Clermont	Neighborhood	Resource	undeveloped
Lake Yale Boat Ramp West	0.70	Eustis	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Lake Yale Boat Ramp East	0.70	Eustis	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Marsh Park & Boat Ramp	35.00	Eustis	Community	Passive	½ basketball court, boat ramp, dock, fishing, trails, picnicking, kiosk, playground
McTureous Memorial Park	2.56	Altoona	Mini	Passive	Veteran memorial, picnic, playground, shelter, restrooms, volleyball
Mt. Plymouth Park	0.40	Mt. Plymouth	Mini	Passive	playground, picnicking

PARK NAME	ACRES	PROXIMITY	CLASS	TYPE	AMENITIES
North Lake Community Park	96.00	Umatilla	Community	Active	Proposed tournament sports complex for sports such as football, baseball and soccer, multi-purpose building, flexible open space, kiosk, parking, dog park
Paisley Community Park	8.10	Paisley	Neighborhood	Active	picnicking, playground, shelters, library, Community Bldg., basketball, ball fields, restrooms, parking
Palatlahaha River Park & BR	23.00	Clermont	Community	Passive	boat ramp, dock, fishing, trail, picnic, playground, restrooms, shelter, Scrub Jay habitat
PEAR Park	318.00	Leesburg	District	Active/Resource	Ball fields, dog park, playground, boardwalk, canoe launch, buildings, pavilions, restoration, boat ramp
Pearl Street Boat Ramp	0.25	Astor	Special Use	Resource	

PARK NAME	ACRES	PROXIMITY	CLASS	TYPE	AMENITIES
Pine Forest Park	48.00	Deland	Community	Passive	basketball, playground, basketball, trail,, restroom, parking restoration
Scott Park	0.65	Mt. Plymouth	Mini	Passive	Playground, picnic
Sorrento Park	3.38	Sorrento	Mini	Active,	basketball court, picnic, playground, shelter, tennis, volleyball
Sparks Village Boat Ramp	0.23	Leesburg	Special Use	Resource	boat ramp
Spring Lake Park	0.38	Fruitland Park	Mini	Resource	fishing
South Umatilla Park	4.00	Umatilla	Mini	Active	picnicking, playground, comm. center trail
Sylvan Shores Park	4.94	Mount Dora	Neighborhood	Resource	
Trout Lake Park	0.31	Eustis	Mini	Resource	undeveloped
Twin Lakes Park	14.50	Leesburg	Neighborhood	Passive	picnicking, playground, basketball, trail, kiosk, parking, pavilion
Umatilla Veterans Hall	0.75	Umatilla	Special Use	Passive	community building,, restrooms

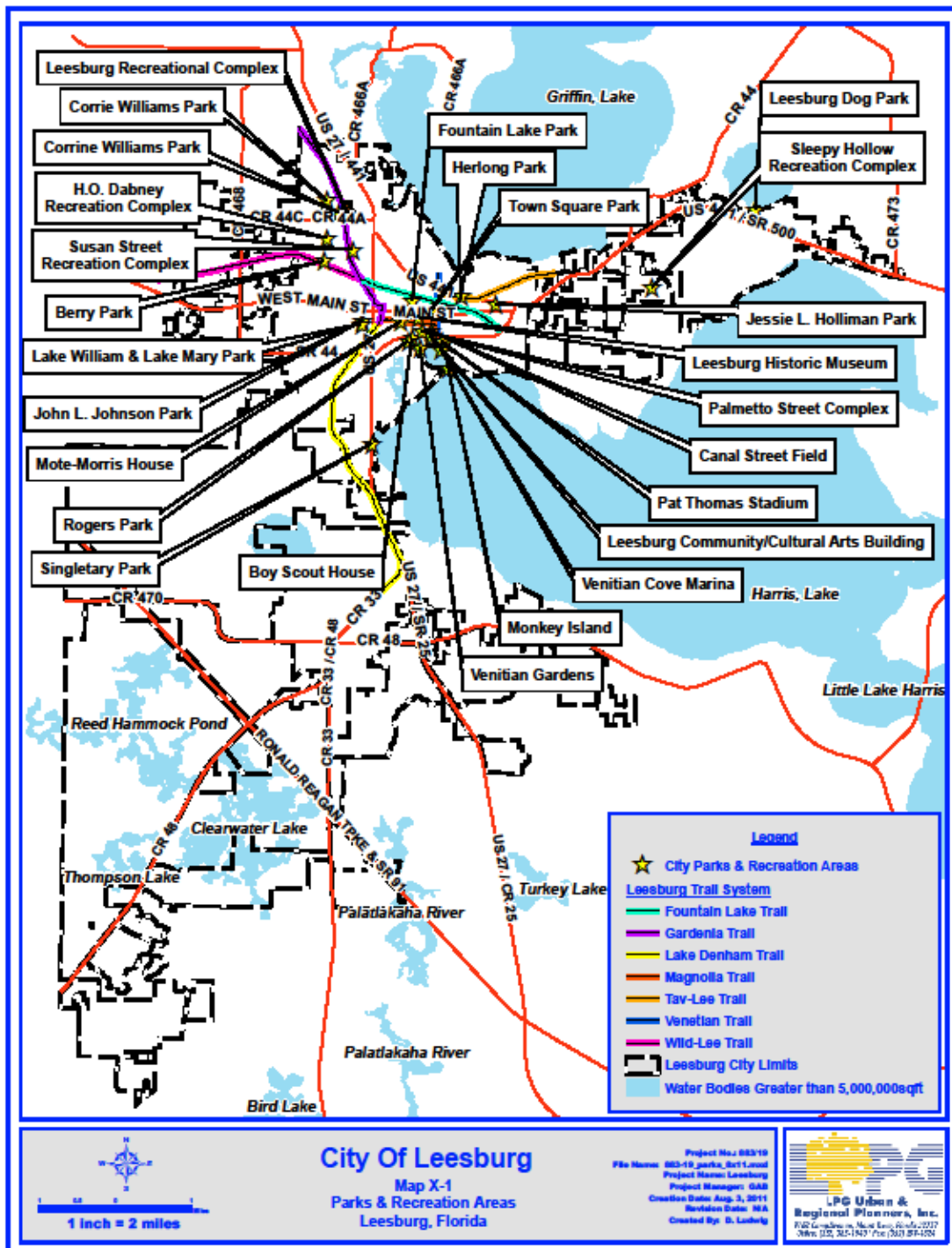
Table X- 5: Inventory of Private Recreational Facilities, 2000.

Private Development	Swimming Pool	Club-House	Golf Course	Shuffleboard Court	Tennis Court	Playground	Other
Wellness Center at Leesburg Regional Medical Center	1						Whirlpool, Fitness Equipment
Coachwood Colony Mobile Home Park		1					
Coachwood East Adult Mobile Home Subdivision	1	1		4			1 Set Horseshoes
Pepper Ridge	1	1		4			
Leesburg Lakeshore Mobile Home Park		1		4			
Lake Griffin Mobile Home Park		1					
Pennbrooke	1	1	9 Hole	8	2		4 Picnic Tables
Silver Lake Country Club	1	1	18 Hole		3		
Cypress Creek Mobile Home Park	1	1		4			4 Sets Horseshoes
Corley Island Mobile Manor	1	1		4			1 Boat Ramp
Lakeside Terrace	1	1		4			
Griffwood Mobile Home Park	1			6			
Harbor Oaks on Lake Griffin	1	1		6			
Brittany Estates	1	1		6			Boat Ramp
Lakeside Village	1	2		3			
Lake Griffin Harbor	1	1		4			Miniature Golf, Boat Ramp
Hickory Hollow Estates	1	1		3			2 Sets Horseshoes
Molokai	1	1		1			3 Sets Horseshoe Pits
Lakes at Leesburg	1	1	9 Hole	8			
Beach Mobile Park		1		2			
Florida Angler's Resort		1		2		1	Picnic Tables
Lake Harris Hideaway		1		2			Boat Ramp
Unnamed Boat Ramp							Boat Ramp

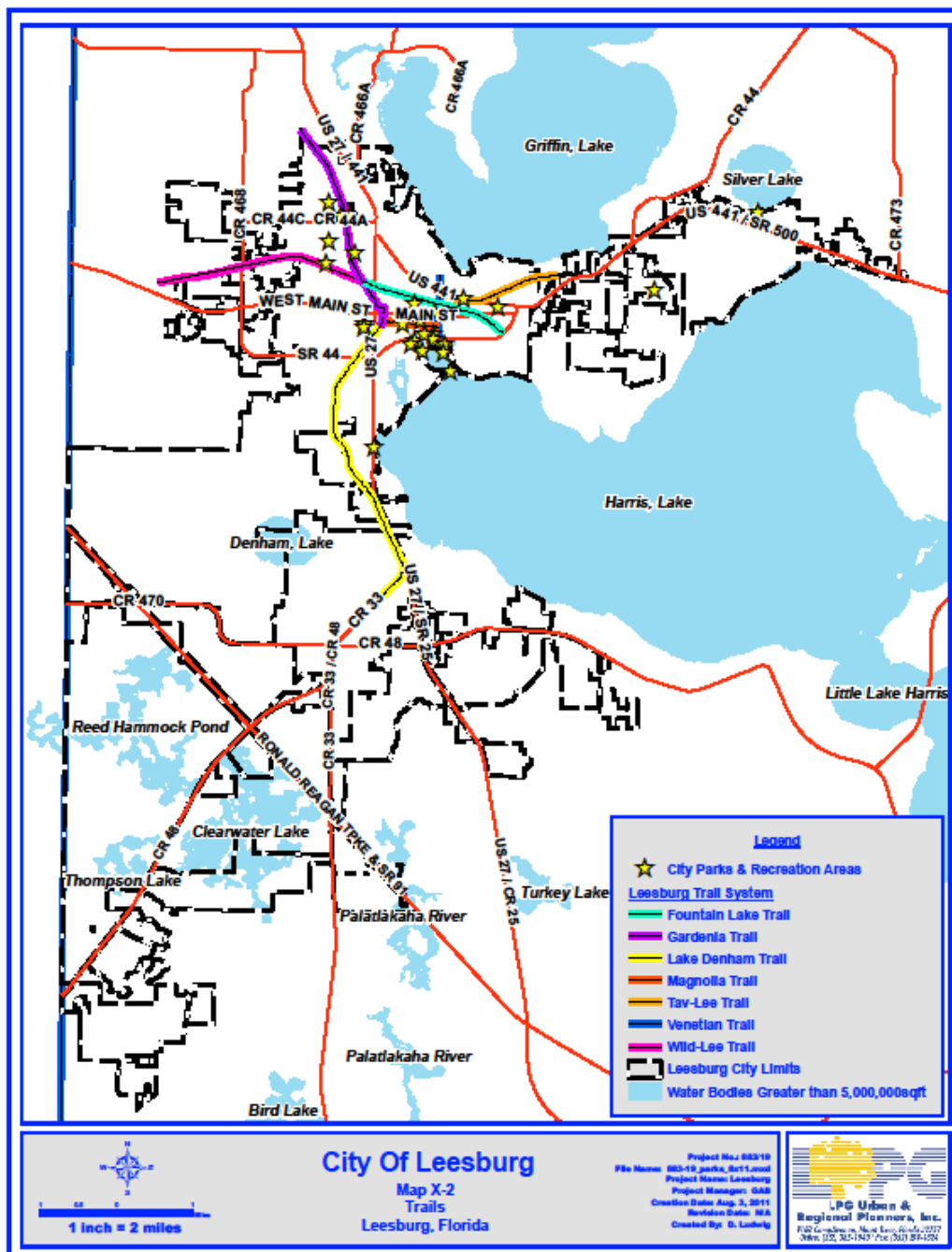
Note: This table provides an example of recreation facilities provided in private developments, however, this is not a comprehensive list of private developments or facilities.

Source: Leesburg Recreation and Parks Department, December 2001.

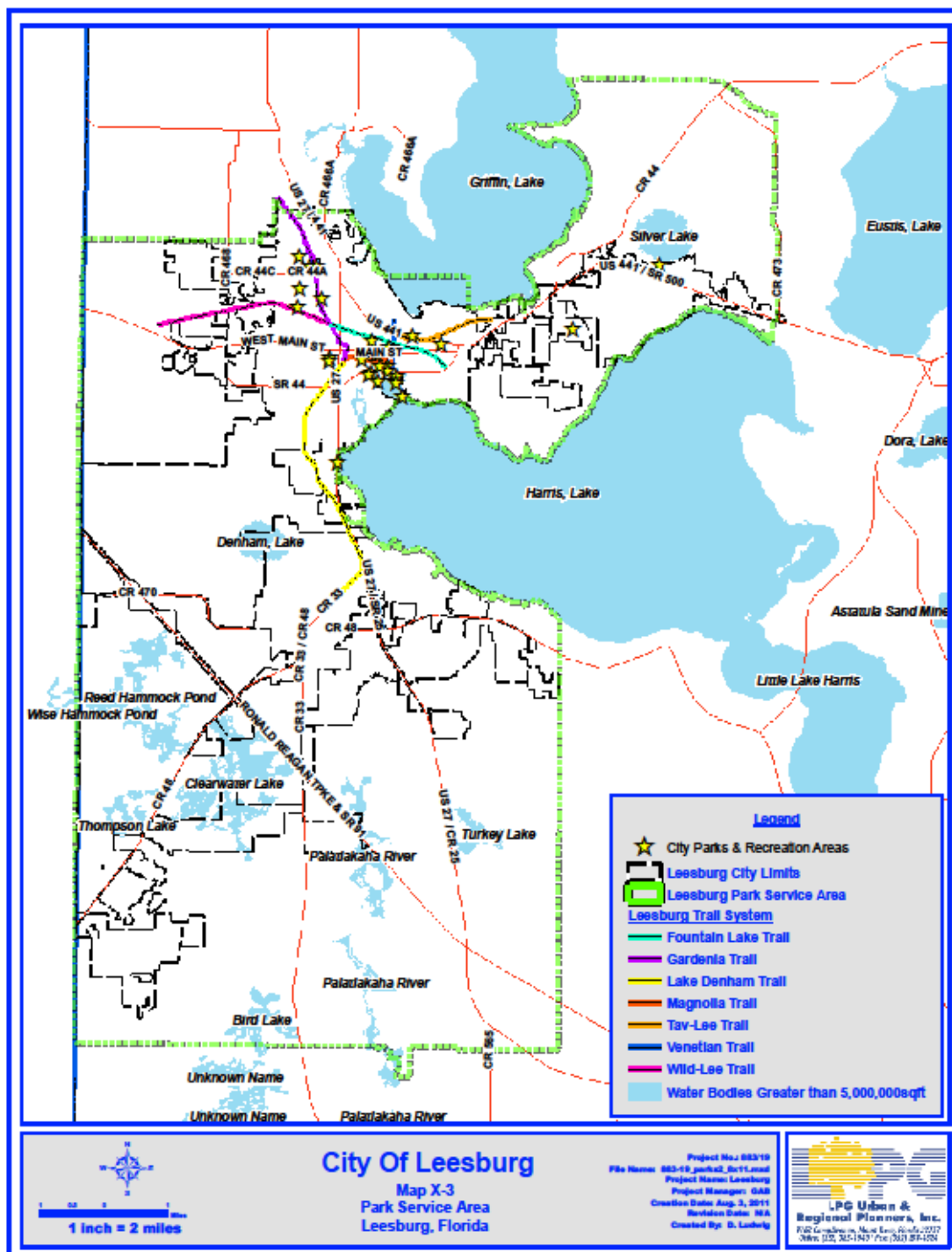
Map X- 1: Parks & Recreation Areas



Map X- 2: Trails



Map X-3: Park Service Area



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1:

The City of Leesburg shall provide adequate open space, parks, and recreation facilities to serve the needs of all residents of the City of Leesburg.

Objective 1.1: Provision of Adequate Sites and Facilities. To ensure adequate lands are provided for public and/or public access parks, the City may utilize criteria specific to population, park size and location. For purposes of implementing this Objective, the City may utilize parklands under the jurisdiction of private development, Lake County, City, State or Federal government

Policy 1.1.1: The City of Leesburg may utilize the following criteria for determining the location and need for park lands:

- Community Park - A facility designed to serve the needs of more than one neighborhood. This facility type shall serve a minimum of 8,000 City residents and is located no greater than three (3) miles from those residents. The minimum size of any new community park shall be twenty (20) acres.
- Neighborhood Park - A facility that serves an entire neighborhood or area that serves a maximum of 5,000 City residents and is located no greater than three-fourths (3/4) of a mile from those residents. The minimum size of a neighborhood park shall be five (5) acres.

Policy 1.1.2: The City shall incorporate the following definitions within it's Land Development Regulations by 2013:

- Active Park – Those park areas that are relatively free of man made structural mass, and are utilized for active recreational pursuits.
- Passive Park – Those parks that are free of man-made structural mass, and are utilized primarily for passive recreational pursuits.
- Activity-Based Recreation Facilities – Facilities designed for specific recreational purposes, such as man-made pools for swimming, courts for tennis, racquetball, basketball, etc.
- Resource-Based Recreation Facilities – Facilities dependent on natural resources such as water for boating, forests for hunting, etc.

Policy 1.1.3: The City shall continue to enforce provisions within the Land Development Regulations which maintain standards for park development and improvements. Standards including buffering, landscaping, parking, and the amount of area available for facilities.

- Policy 1.1.4:** The City may utilize park and facility guidelines established by “Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008” for the provision of recreation facilities based on a median population served:
- Policy 1.1.5:** Mandatory Dedication of Land. The City shall continue to enforce provisions within the Land Development Regulations which require new residential development to provide land required for open space.
- Policy 1.1.6:** The City shall allow payment in lieu of providing open space lands to meet the Land Development Code requirements. The payment shall be based on a fair share fee as established by the City Commission by Resolution. All such fees collected shall be allocated and appropriated to the City’s recreation budget to be expended and enhance the City’s community park system with priority given to expend such funds to acquire parkland.

Objective 1.2: *Natural Resources.* Maintain a comprehensive park and open space system to ensure the provision of open space, which utilizes existing resources and is consistent with the land and financial resources available.

- Policy 1.2.1:** The City shall continue to investigate opportunities for public access and enjoyment of the waterfront; improved bike, pedestrian, and equestrian trail systems; as well as open space opportunities, where feasible.
- Policy 1.2.2:** The City shall continue to maintain ecologically sensitive wetland areas as open space areas to be protected and enjoyed by the community.
- Policy 1.2.3:** Ecologically sensitive lands shall be left in their natural state and considered as part of the City’s passive recreation and open space system. Programs to implement this policy shall incorporate the designation of ecologically sensitive areas, where little or no development is permitted, as open space areas.
- Policy 1.2.4:** The City shall continue to protect the recreational value of its water resources and participate in programs to improve water quality.
- Policy 1.2.5:** As part of the annexation process, the City shall identify and designate ecologically sensitive wetland areas as conservation areas.
- Policy 1.2.6:** The City of Leesburg will remove non-native vegetation located in recreation and conservation land owned by the City consistent with funding availability and financial planning defined in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Policy 1.2.7:** The City of Leesburg will restore or enhance degraded natural areas in recreation and conservation land owned by the City consistent with

funding availability and financial planning defined in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Objective 1.3: ***Capital Improvements.*** On an annual basis, the City shall assess needs and propose capital improvements to provide adequate park and recreational facilities and land to meet the demands of future growth.

Policy 1.3.1: The City shall review park and recreation facilities on an annual basis, in order to maintain adequate facilities.

Policy 1.3.2: The City shall evaluate recreational need for newly annexed areas.

Policy 1.3.3: The Capital Improvements Element shall designate facilities needed to meet future demands

Objective 1.4: ***Maximize Resources.*** The City shall maximize the use of public and private resources in the provision of park and recreational facilities to meet the current and future demands.

Policy 1.4.1: The City shall continue to coordinate the provision of park and recreation facilities and activities with county, regional, and state plans and programs.

Policy 1.4.2: The City shall continue to coordinate with Lake County, Lake Sumter Metropolitan Planning Origination, the Florida Trail Association, the Trails to Trails Conservancy, the Department of Environmental Protection and other organizations involved in the acquisition and development of trail systems.

Policy 1.4.3: The City shall make recommendations of acquisition, through the Conversation and Recreation Land (CARL) program, the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) program, the Save Our Rivers Program, and Lake County's land acquisition programs of the most vulnerable ecological communities as deemed necessary by the City.

Policy 1.4.4: The City will explore, in cooperation with Lake County, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the St. Johns' River Water Management District (SJRWMD), a means for extending the existing Palatlakaha River hiking trail through the Palatlakaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Center beyond its current limits as a part of a system of unified trails and greenways.

Policy 1.4.5: The City shall continue to provide interlocal agreements and cooperate with private and not for profit organizations for use of City parks and facilities in order to provide a variety of recreational programs.

Policy 1.4.6: New park and trail development shall address the cost to maintain each facility prior to implementation. Design/maintenance techniques, materials, and procurement methods should be used that provide the most cost effective measures to develop, as well as maintain the park and trail facilities.

Policy 1.4.7: Design of new facilities should consider revenue generating opportunities (i.e. concessions, rentals) that could offset operational cost or enhance the recreational experience as appropriate.

Objective 1.5: ***Accessibility.*** The City shall ensure adequate and safe access to all public parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 1.5.1: All City owned public recreation and open space facilities shall be made easily assessable to all City residents including the elderly, the physically impaired, and the economically disadvantaged.

Policy 1.5.2: All City recreation and open space facilities shall provide access for the physically impaired.

Policy 1.5.3: All City owned facilities shall be accessible to automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians where appropriate.

Policy 1.5.4: The City shall work with the Council on Aging, to provide access to City recreation and open space facilities.

Policy 1.5.5: The City shall provide recreation and open space programs for economically disadvantaged citizens through civic organizations.

Policy 1.5.6: The City shall strive to interconnect existing and future dedicated open space areas, pedestrian and bicycle trails, hiking trails, equestrian trails, and where appropriate, abandoned railroad right of way and utility corridors, into the trail network.

Policy 1.5.7: The City may consider the following guidelines and standards in the planning and development of trails: the Florida Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Handbook by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails Reference and Resource Guide.

Policy 1.5.8: The City shall evaluate the need and amend, if necessary, the Land Development Regulations public road design standards for bicycle travel and pedestrian needs in conjunction with roadway design and improvements.

Objective 1.6: ***Park Identification.*** The City of Leesburg shall inventory and clearly identify parks through the creation of a uniform sign package.

Policy 1.6.1: The City of Leesburg has established and erected uniform signs for all City owned and maintained parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 1.6.2: The City of Leesburg shall update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as needed.

Objective 1.7: ***Private Development.*** As part of new residential development, the City of Leesburg shall coordinate and encourage the provision of neighborhood parks as either individual sites, or as part of larger parks to meet the City’s recreation and open space demands.

Policy 1.7.1: The City shall coordinate ways and means for private developers to provide public recreational facilities within their developments.

Policy 1.7.2: As stated in the City’s Land Development Code, developers shall donate open space. The amount of such donations shall be based on land use category and the minimum open space requirements and the transfer shall be completed prior to the issuance of a final development order.

Policy 1.7.3: The City shall utilize the park and facility guidelines established by “Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008” to recommend recreation improvements located within the private development.